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ABSTRACT

This chapter proposes a new approach to counselor education as a means of preparing school counselors to work in twenty-first century schools. It is proposed that it is critical that school counselors move beyond their current roles as helper-responders in order to become proactive leaders and advocates for the success of all students in schools. When school counselors work in this fashion, they become an integral part of schools and education reform. This vision places school counselors in the essential role of examining and questioning inequitable practices that do not serve the interests of all students. The chapter describes how counselor educators might prepare school counselors to become action-oriented critical thinkers. It also encourages the creation of learning communities among counselors-in-training and the schools, students, families, and communities that they will ultimately serve. (Contains 33 references.) (GCP)

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Chapter Thirteen

Changing School Counselor Preparation: A Critical Need

Reese M. House, Patricia J. Martin & Colin C. Ward

In this chapter we propose a new approach to counselor education as a means of preparing school counselors to work in twenty-first-century schools. It is critical that school counselors move beyond their current roles as helper-responders in order to become proactive leaders and advocates for the success of all students in schools. When school counselors work in this fashion, they become an integral part of schools and educational reform. This vision places school counselors in the essential role of examining and questioning inequitable practices that do not serve the interests of all students.

We believe that school counselors must be taught to question the beliefs, assumptions, and values behind inequitable school policies, structures, or actions. This process of learning how to question needs to start in counselor preparation programs. This can be done in counselor preparation by emphasizing the value of experience, promoting active learning, engaging in reflective practice, and inviting dialogue among students and faculty. Such themes can guide program development, classroom exchanges, field experiences, interactions with colleagues, and collaboration with community members. Through these processes, school counselors are taught to take stands against injustices and join counselor educators and community stakeholders in thoughtfully constructing a blueprint for student success.

In this chapter we describe how counselor educators might prepare school counselors to become action-oriented critical thinkers. We also encourage the creation of learning communities among counselors-in-training and the schools, students, families,

and communities that they ultimately will serve. We hope students who internalize and use the skills gained from this teaching will become professionals who embrace change, continually reflect on practice, and constantly seek to make schools better.

Rationale for Changes in School Counseling

Throughout the nation, communities are striving to improve their schools. To date, major American school reform efforts have focused on accountability for student performance by setting more rigorous academic standards, building new assessment strategies, and restructuring pre-service and in-service experiences for teachers and administrators (Mohrman & Lawler, 1996). In the United States, two primary events have fueled these efforts: (a) the unrelenting call for accountability for educating all students to higher academic standards, and (b) the economic demand for a more knowledgeable workforce. Concurrent with demands for accountability, reform is driven by awareness that the student population has become more diverse and now includes increased numbers of poor and minority children living in urban and rural communities. Data from states and local school districts show that poor students and students of color are systemically denied an education that would lead them to success in school and in the marketplace (Achievement in America, 2000). These data point out a significant achievement gap between poor and minority students and their more advantaged peers (Haycock, 1998).

The Achievement Gap

Educational equity in a democratic society requires that all children have equal access to quality education. Data collected on student achievement in America show that, except for a few schools, poor and minority students do not perform as well on any existing measures of academic proficiency as do middle- and upper-class White students (Achievement in America, 2000). Many poor and minority children do not obtain the skills and knowledge necessary to participate successfully in the twenty-first-century economy. This achievement gap has become the driving force for recent education reform efforts.

The achievement gap among students exists primarily because educators (a) expect less of minority and low-income children; (b) provide some students (usually White and middle

class) with a rigorous, high quality curriculum and others with a watered-down, weak curriculum; and (c) provide fewer material resources to students who have the greatest need (Achievement in America, 2000). The need to raise academic achievement in our poorer schools is paramount, and is eloquently expressed by an African American high school senior:

> We are not only given the short end of the stick in terms of facilities and resources; but inner-city students aren't expected to excel. We are sometimes granted honors for completing only part of a task, while students in more affluent areas are expected to do more to get the same recognition. We are pitied by outsiders who sometimes try to "help" by giving us undeserved praise. Thus, we often don't expect much more of our own selves. We aren't pushed hard enough. We are babied by our teachers for too long. (Swasey, 1996–1997, p. 25)

School Counselors and Reform

The importance of educational reform is clear to us. Our global society is increasingly dependent on the development and better use of all our human resources. As Elam (1993) stated, High-level thinking, lifelong learning, and the capacity to make frequent career changes will be required in an increasingly competitive, high-tech, knowledge-driven, worldwide economy" (p. 276). Not addressing the need for educational change and continuing to foster low expectations and inadequate academic preparation for poor and minority students is paramount to benign neglect. Thus, school counselors support this neglect when they intentionally or inadvertently become part of the system that relegates large numbers of students to limited career options, virtually closing doors on their futures.

We believe that school counselors must be central players in reconstructing the system through leadership and advocacy. Yet, to date, education reformers have paid little or no attention to the key roles school counselors play in promoting the academic success of all students. School counselors, who have long been the keepers of records, have the opportunity to examine data about what is happening to students in schools; to engage in dialogue with teachers, administrators, parents, and community members to tackle these issues; and to develop strategies to

change these debilitating patterns.

Current Forces Shaping School Counseling

Why don't most school counselors involve themselves in educational reform efforts and actively work to promote academic success for all students? The answer to this question is complex. Current school counselor behavior results from pre-service training, conflicting roles, strong administrative prescriptions, pliable and overly accommodating counselor behavior, limited professional development opportunities, and overt and covert pressures from school, community, and parental special interest groups (Walz, 1997).

Most importantly, when school counselors lack a strong personal and professional compass—their own well-conceived vision or mission, defined programs, and identified roles—they function at the direction of others. School administrators, parents with special interests, teachers, and others often insist that school counselors adopt their agendas (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 1998).

Unfortunately, this means that school counselors often serve as maintainers of the status quo, advocating for the school system rather than for students and marginalized groups. They become "sorters and selectors," perpetuating the accepted placements and systemic barriers that cause an inequitable distribution between achievers and non-achievers based on race and socioeconomic status (Hart & Jacobi, 1992).

School Counselor Preparation Programs: Current Status

Another major factor influencing school counseling is that, for the most part, traditional counselor education programs have not provided learning opportunities that prepare school counselors to be knowledgeable about education reform issues or how to be vital players in implementing reform strategies in schools. School counselors have not been taught about social and systems change, political climates, and power structures of schools and communities. Trainees have not been taught elements of leadership and collaboration that would enable them to instigate or facilitate effective systemic change. For the most part, counselor educators have not designed their curricula to teach advocacy, question the status quo, and challenge systems

(Capuzzi, 1998; The Education Trust, 1997).

Instead, school counselor preparation programs have moved more and more toward a mental health model, one that favors one-to-one counseling over educational, group, or institutional change practices (Collison et al., 1998). Large portions of counselor education curricula for pre-service school counselors focus on clinical practice. Yet clinical practice in schools frequently conflicts with the mission of schooling and the needs and priorities of teachers and administrators.

Clearly, some school-age students need mental health services. However, such a mental health model, based on a closed and confidential relationship between counselor and student rather than on a systemic approach to improving learning, creates a climate of mistrust between counselors and teachers. Teachers frequently comment: "What is the counselor doing behind closed doors with that student?" or "Jane is not doing any better in my class and you have been seeing her for six months. What is going on?" Such questions reflect the isolation promoted by a mental health model. Instead, school counselors need a model that emphasizes collaboration with teachers and administrators in order to minimize such mistrust and to be more effective on a larger population.

Schools have never been structured or staffed with low enough counselor-client ratios to allow school counselors to be effective mental health providers. Currently, the student-to-counselor ratio in the United States is 513 to 1 (American Counseling Association [ACA], 1999). With this ratio, school counselors find it impossible to provide effective mental health services concurrently with performing the many tasks vital to the operation of schools. Even when tasks performed by counselors are appropriate, and exclude the many clerical and administrative duties often assigned to school counselors, they are unable to serve effectively as mental health providers. Therefore, school counselors frequently experience dissonance between the mental health training they received and the work they actually do in schools (Walz, 1997).

Despite the revolutionary changes in K–12 education, counselor education seems to be maintaining the status quo. Bradley (1997) stated that "maintaining the status quo seems to be the mode of operation in higher education" (p. 30), and serves to neutralize both internal and external forces proposing change. Much time and energy is spent reacting to external pressures, such as state certification requirements and accreditation bodies,

as well as currently publicized social issues such as violence, suicide, drugs, gangs, and so forth. To change, counselor educators need to move beyond this reactive approach and move to a proactive approach that addresses systems change.

Social-Critical Thinking and Systems Change

Education systems can either discourage or empower students to critically question systemic inconsistencies (Darder, 1991). Educational systems that discourage students perpetuate the creation of obedient, moldable, passive, and low-paid future workers incapable of changing systems. On the other hand, educational systems that empower students educate them to become critical, involved citizens (McLaren, 1989). In our proposal to change school counseling, we assume that school counselors can make a difference in promoting academic success if they first develop a broad social consciousness and a critical awareness of conditions in society and schools that impinge upon that success (Southers, 1991).

When counselor educators promote systemic change through critical inquiry, they empower counselors themselves to be leaders and change agents in society (Darling-Hammond, 1993). From this perspective, we as counseling professionals need to influence the social, cultural, and political dynamics that undergird academic success. Advocating for high achievement for all students is proposed here as a key role for counselors. It places them at the center of the mission of schooling and education reform.

The culture-centered training curriculum developed by Pedersen and Ivey (1993) provides a basis for focusing on these systemic issues. It emphasizes the incorporation of cultural worldviews in counseling training, utilizing the triad of counseling, consultation, and case-management strategies. This curriculum asks counselors-in-training to reflect on questions such as: (a) Is my present approach to helping efficient, effective, and relevant? (b) How do I determine the true meaning, scope, and effect on those I serve? (c) Do I see myself as a remedial expert, working one-to-one to provide direct service to selected individuals, or do I see myself as being systems-oriented? and (d) What effect am I having on the total school community? (Kurpius, 1992).

Motivating and Preparing for Action

What will prompt counselor educators to change? First, counselor educators must themselves believe that change is necessary. Second, they must be convinced that these changes will benefit the counselor education students, the students in K–12 schools, and the community at large. Then, the question becomes, "Is it possible to design such a system-challenging, visionary curriculum from within institutions that do not necessarily reward such change?" We recommend that counselor educators begin by critically questioning their own beliefs.

Examining Beliefs

Counselor educators may want to begin examining what they believe by asking themselves these fundamental questions:

- What do I believe about my own ability to be a leader and a change agent?
- What are the current gaps between preparation and practice in K–12 schools?
- What do I believe about changing systems?
- What do I believe school counselors need to know and be able to do?
- How do I currently change my teaching and my program to be responsive to the feedback I have received from counselors I have taught?
- What feedback is important enough to make a difference in how I prepare school counselors?
- How do I use data on schools and student achievement to make changes in my program?
- How do I teach others to think systemically about schools, learning, and achievement?
- As an instructor, how do I model leadership, advocacy, and systemic change?
- How do the graduates of my program demonstrate accountability for their work?
- What do I believe about the ability of all school-age students to reach high academic standards?
- How does my behavior as an instructor affect the students I teach?

Examining the Need for Change

Reflective inquiry about current program practices may help counselor educators decide the depth and breadth of changes

that may be necessary. Reflecting on the following questions may stimulate necessary discussion:

- Are we currently preparing school counselors to work effectively in schools?
- What might cause us to be more proactive in our programs?
- How might we respond more actively in changing curricula to meet the current needs of school counseling students?
- What might we do differently in influencing the structure of our school counseling programs?
- What might prompt us to change our way of teaching?
- How can we create a cohesive school counseling curriculum that is closely aligned with the mission of schools and schooling?
- How would working actively in a learning community enhance my teaching?

Examining How Systems Change

After examining their personal beliefs and what steps might be necessary for change, counselor educators can look at the systems that need to change. Key elements in a system include the internal university environment (the department chair, the dean, the provost), the near external environment (the local area schools, community, business), and the more remote external environment (the state legislature, the board of education, the certification bodies). These entities all assist or deter change. Counselor educators may want to ask themselves the following:

- What are the beliefs, assumptions, and values behind a particular policy, structure, action, or orientation? Who shares these beliefs?
- What are the historical sources of these beliefs?
- Whose knowledge is considered legitimate?
- Who prospers if we act according to the identified beliefs?
- Who is empowered, disempowered, or disenfranchised by these beliefs?

The answers to these questions may offer insight into the feasibility of making changes in school counselor preparation.

Action Questions

Those ready to move toward implementation of a new approach to counselor preparation may want to ask the following

questions to guide them in taking further steps:

- What is necessary to develop and nurture a community of learners in the classroom?
- How do we define ourselves as a learning community?
- How do we encourage dialogue that leads to generative solution-finding rather than presenting ourselves as having most of the answers?
- How do we decide what will be included or excluded from discussion or practice?
- How can we make a given situation more equitable, democratic, and accessible?
- What kind of pedagogy, experiences, and modeling best prepare critical, reflective practitioners?
- How do we encourage a diversity of views and alternatives?
- How do we call attention to social injustices and inequities?
- How have we exercised our voices for change?
- How have we helped students develop and exercise their voices?

Goals for School Counselor Preparation

After counselor education faculty have engaged in such reflective "soul searching," they then need to decide what changes to pursue. We suggest that counselor educators "begin with the end in mind" (Covey, 1992, p. 42) and look at the product of counselor education; that is, what school counselors themselves would do if they worked as leaders and advocates for change in the schools. We propose that in addition to being skilled counselors who work with students' personal concerns, school counselors need to do the following:

- Behave as if they expect all students to achieve at a high level.
- Actively work to remove barriers to learning.
- Teach students how to help themselves (e.g., organization, study, and test-taking skills).
- Teach students and their families how to manage successfully the bureaucracy of the school system; for example, teach parents how to (a) enroll their children in academic courses that will lead to college, (b) make formal requests to school officials on various matters, and (c) monitor the academic progress of their children.

- Teach students and their families how to access support systems that encourage academic success; for example, (a) inform students and parents about tutoring and academic enrichment opportunities, and (b) teach students and parents how to find resources on preparation for standardized tests.
- Use local, regional, and national data on disparities in resources and academic achievement to promote systemic change.
- Work collaboratively with all school personnel.
- Offer staff development training for school personnel that promotes high expectations and high standards for all students.
- Use data as a tool to challenge the deleterious effects of low-level and unchallenging courses.
- Highlight accurate information that negates myths about who can and cannot achieve success in rigorous courses.
- Organize community activities to promote supportive structures for high standards for all students (e.g., after-school tutoring programs at neighborhood religious settings).
- Help parents and the communities organize efforts to work with schools to institute and support high standards for all children.
- Work as resource brokers within the community to identify all available resources to help students succeed.

Widening the lens of what school counselors see as their job in these ways implies the formation of a new training model, one based on systems thinking about schools and schooling.

Necessary Programmatic Changes

We propose a mission-driven model for the program and the use of eight essential elements of change to revise school counselor preparation curricula. The eight essential elements are (a) criteria for selection and recruitment of candidates for counselor preparation programs; (b) curricular content, structure, and sequence of courses; (c) method of instruction, field experiences, and practice; (d) induction process into the profession; (e) working relationships with community partners; (f) professional development for counselor educators; (g) university–school district partnerships; and (h) university–state

department of education partnerships. Counselor education faculty can use these elements as a framework for organizing thinking, planning, and implementing program changes.

Becoming a Mission-Driven Program

An overriding principle of any counselor education program and a prerequisite to using the eight essential elements as an organizational model is the development of a mission statement. A clear mission statement for school counselor preparation becomes the driving force of the program. A clear mission statement for school counselor preparation can determine the admissions criteria, the curricula of the program, and the type of pedagogy. In other words, the mission statement provides the guiding principles for (a) the program, (b) how we teach, (c) what is being taught, and (d) whom we teach. Thus, it shapes the curriculum as well as the practicing counselors graduating from the program.

We recommend an inclusive mission-creating process. When counselor educators include non-university community partners in developing a mission statement, the resulting mission takes on greater relevance to the needs of counselors, administrators, teachers, and students in schools. To develop a mission statement, school counselor educators can begin by looking at what they believe and value about (a) their teaching style, (b) their teaching methods, (c) school-age children, (d) educational attainment for all students, (e) future career options for students they serve, (f) what school counselors should know and be able to do when they complete the program, and (g) measurable outcomes for the work of school counselors.

1. Improving Criteria for Selection and Recruitment of Candidates for Counselor Preparation

Typically, counselor education programs have not actively recruited students to their programs, but instead have either accepted all applicants or used a screening process to select an identified number of students each year. Program faculty often state that graduate school requirements of certain scores on GRE qualifying examinations hamstring them.

Rather than following the "standard" procedures already in place, faculty can develop new criteria for selection based on the mission of the program. This will mean questioning the current systemic regulations that are preventing candidates from

diverse backgrounds from enrolling in the program. Because of the increasing number of students of color in our schools, it is critical that school counselors represent diverse ethnic backgrounds. Questioning the rules and regulations provides a leadership and modeling opportunity for faculty. Seizing this opportunity to recruit more minorities to your campus might even bring critical acclaim when you are successful.

Instituting this "active admissions" process becomes a way for counselor educators to model leadership and advocacy. First steps include questioning all current procedures to see if they are serving the desired purposes and gaining the numbers of qualified students that you want in the program. After review of current procedures, implementation strategies might include such approaches as (a) working with local school districts to identify teachers that might be excellent counselors; (b) devising a nomination process so that community and school members could nominate prospective students; (c) creating an active recruiting committee consisting of faculty, practicing school counselors, students, community members, and school administrators; (d) making recruiting visits to historically Black and Hispanic institutions; and (e) working with the equity center on campus to recruit candidates.

In addition to these recruitment processes, it will be necessary to revisit the selection procedures. On what basis are students admitted to the program? What questions are asked of applicants? How are applicants screened? Are group or individual interviews conducted? Who is involved in the selection process? This may be an excellent opportunity to include school and community members in your program by inviting them to participate in the selection process. Thus, they become more invested in counselors working in schools.

After a review of the selection, recruitment, and admissions process, a new process is made public. The mission statement that includes the intent of the program should be included in the admissions materials. One by-product of this new process is that students will self-select from the program. If they are not seeking training to be advocates, leaders, and change agents, but rather want to be "helpers" and start a clinical practice, then this is not the program for them. On the other hand, word will spread about the kind of preparation the program entails, and the new admissions standards will attract more "qualified" candidates.

2. Altering the Content, Structure, and Delivery of the Curriculum

Once the mission has been clarified, it directs the content, structure, and sequencing of courses. The following questions may further stimulate discussions on needed changes:

- What course content, skills, and knowledge are essential to producing school counselors to meet the program mission statement?
- What is the rationale for the sequence of courses in the program?
- How does the program integrate its philosophy and mission into the teaching, curriculum, and course sequence?
- How does the mission influence pedagogy?
- How will we collaborate with other important stakeholders in the development of the new curricular content, structure, and sequence of courses?

Some innovations that might be considered are alternative methods of delivering coursework and developing a learning community.

Delivery of Coursework

Counselor educators need to consider alternative means of course delivery, such as (a) teaching at public schools or in the community; (b) inviting school counselors and administrators to co-teach some classes; (c) scheduling more courses on weekends; (d) offering more courses through distance education; or (e) teaming with faculty from educational administration to co-teach a course for both administrators and counselors. By diversifying the location or delivery of instruction, we move away from the concept of the university as the seat of knowledge. This broadens the universe from which knowledge is gained. The University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee designed one successful example of an alternative delivery method, in cooperation with the Milwaukee public schools. They admitted teachers from a large school district and worked collaboratively with school district personnel to co-teach these students in a cohort model. A majority of the classes were taught in the public schools at times convenient to teachers.

Developing a Learning Community

Strong learning communities can provide modeling, reflection opportunities, and group interaction for school

counseling students (Ward & House, 1998). A learning community emphasizes inquiry and supports different social and cultural contexts. In the learning community, knowledge is challenged, redefined, and negotiated by all participants (Griffen, 1993). It is our premise that this approach allows future school counselors to gain insights into the social and cultural implications of different ways of knowing, different forms of knowledge, and different approaches to research.

One way to encourage the development of a learning community in the counselor education program is to utilize a cohort model of training, as defined by Paisley and Hayes (2000). These authors state that use of a cohort model creates the expectations among students that they ought to collaborate with others and provides a model usable later when students become school counselors. In a cohort model, a group of students enters and progresses through the program together. Also, instructors plan activities in courses, practica, and internships that require students regularly to work collaboratively. Osborne et al. (1998) elaborated on the use of a cohort model and emphasized the benefits of a cohort model coupled with a retreat experience designed to build cohesiveness.

In cohort models, individuals examine interpersonal dynamics and learn to value the unique worldview of each participant. Communication, negotiation, and conflict management become vehicles for enhanced learning. Cohort models use teaming, peer coaching, generative problem-solving, and collaboration, methods that are critical to school counselors becoming leaders and advocates in their schools and communities.

3. Methods of Instruction, Field Experiences, and Practice

Developing Constructivist Methods of Delivering Instruction and Field Experiences

In this new approach to teaching school counselors, the methods of instruction, field experiences, and practica would be transformed to include (a) early experiential learning in the schools, (b) early and continuous integration of theory and practice, and (c) frequent opportunities for counselors to know and understand schools and schooling. The program faculty would focus on (a) learning rather than teaching; (b) induction-oriented, interactive teaching rather than lecture; (c) sharing belief systems; (d) modeling advocacy, leadership, and community involvement; (e) collaborating and teaming with school and

community stakeholders; (f) modeling the use of data to make informed decisions for systemic change; and (g) placing students in the school system early and frequently.

Courses could be designed and taught in a collaborative yet focused fashion that implements the program's mission. For example, the research course could help students to (a) examine current use of data and explore biases in data collection strategies; (b) analyze data samples disaggregated by race, ethnic group, and gender; (c) identify educational inequities reflected in such data; (d) generate hypotheses for action research; (e) develop an action plan to garner support for such disaggregated data collection; and (f) work collaboratively with the instructor and representatives from the school district and community to build strategies for such change in schools and districts. Teaching strategies for such a course might include

- understanding social and cultural issues that affect all members of society (e.g., racism, sexism, socioeconomic status, and ageism), utilizing guest speakers, videos, and class member experiences;
- introducing methods and strategies of advocacy to instigate social change;
- providing examples of advocacy projects initiated by the faculty member teaching the class;
- requiring a group project on an issue that the students identify as needing change;
- teaching the students how to collect and utilize data to determine the need for change; and
- collaborating with students in developing and carrying out a plan of action based on needs and data, and evaluating the plan.

Direct Experience in the Schools

Counselor educators' ongoing experience in the schools models for students an investment in collaborative work. The vast differences between how counselors are often taught and how they actually work in the schools may be reduced by building such collaborative relationships with school district administrators, supervisors, teachers, and counselors, and by early, frequent, and direct experience in the schools. Students and faculty are thus exposed to the daily lives of students, families, teachers, counselors, administrators, schools, and the community. In this process they learn counseling models, child and family counseling approaches, social service case-

management approaches, community resources, and systemic paradigms of change. In addition, they become familiar with education reform issues, gain knowledge of the achievement gap, learn how to collect and use data, and gain an understanding of standards-based assessment, testing, and interpretation; special education; and school policy.

Teaching Reflectivity

Reflectivity, as it applies to schooling, is a conscious effort by school counselors to identify contradictions and hidden or distorted understandings extant in the schools (Lather, 1986). Learning to practice reflectivity helps future counselors to "think outside the box" and question the status quo.

Such a reflective inquiry method can highlight the social and political patterns preventing access and equity to a quality education for all students in public schools. In this reflective mode, students are asked to contemplate fundamental questions such as (a) What do I do? (b) How do I do it? and (c) What does this mean both for myself as a professional and for those whom I serve? Reflective practice includes recognizing professional dilemmas and inconsistencies, using them to construct meaning, and from such meaning developing guides for action (Mezirow, 1994; Colton & Sparks-Langer, 1993). Strategies that counselor educators could employ in their classes to teach reflectivity include

- **Reflective journaling:** writing out confusions, frustrations, questions, intentions, hypotheses, and assumptions pertaining to students or classroom events.
- **Retrospection:** drawing together materials (case notes, reflective pad, or literature) that link practice to the articulation of those values, beliefs, and concepts.
- **Reflective supervision:** reviewing during supervision the purpose, beliefs, and assumptions of school counseling to aid in clarifying patterns and themes necessary for learning and professional growth.
- **Reflective dialogue:** reviewing journal entries and other reflections with peers, focusing on what happened, what is being learned, and the meaning of the events.
- **Extension:** extending this reflective dialogue beyond peers to school and community members to widen and enrich the learning.
- **Action research:** reviewing the literature, applying the relevant findings to counseling in schools, conducting

an action research study, and reflecting on this research process.

It is important to note that in this process of teaching students to be reflective, they will begin to challenge, question, and push the envelope on a variety of issues with the instructors. This becomes an opportunity to dialogue with students about advocacy, leadership, and change. This is not a passive exercise, but an active, involved, and engaged process in which open dialogue and exchange of ideas are encouraged and supported. The classroom becomes a place for safe practice of introducing new ideas and new ways of looking at systems change, and the process prepares students for such exchanges in schools. This is a very different way of teaching than a lecture style or planned discussion on selected topics.

4. Improving the Process of Induction into the Profession

Preparation to be a school counselor does not stop with completion of the program. Often the most difficult part of becoming a school counselor is putting into practice in the schools the skills and knowledge learned in the program. Developing and maintaining professional relationships and making a difference in the profession become critical functions for the new school counselor. For school counselors to work as questioners of the status quo and initiators of action, they need continuing support, constant reflectivity and feedback, and a period of mentoring by a practicing counselor who understands and engages in a social-critical approach to counseling. Questions for counselor educators to consider during the new-counselor induction phase include

- What critical experiences and professional involvement are needed during the preparation program?
- What kind of follow-up support does the faculty provide for new school counselors?
- Who are designated as mentors and how can faculty secure mentors for new professionals?
- How does the program emphasize the importance of continuing professional development?
- Have we included adequate information about entering the profession during the preparation program?
- How does the faculty contribute to continuing professional development activities for school counselors that support the program philosophy, mission, and goals?

- How does the faculty encourage and support new school counselors to take risks for youth, including those that challenge the system?
- How does the program assist new school counselors to obtain allies who might support them in their work?

5. Developing Working Relationships with Community Partners

One of the tenets of the education reform movement is the belief that schools cannot function successfully without supportive community partnerships (Gerstner, Semerad, Doyle, & Johnston, 1994; Schorr, 1997). The creation of successful school counselor training programs also depends on strong and viable community partnerships. The essential nature of this endeavor is based on the concept that change agents receive ultimate direction from the community (Homan, 1999). As Homan explains, "You are working with a community rather than having a community working with you. The change agent must listen to the community as well as offer direction. It is the community who must act, not just the change agent, and the final decisions will always reside with the community. After all, whose change is it anyway?" (1999, p. 10).

As counselor educators consider working with community partners to gain insight and information, they might consider the following questions.

- What is the relationship among the community, local schools, and the counselor preparation program?
- How do we engage critical stakeholders in meaningful dialogue about training school counselors?
- What collaborative efforts exist to support closing the achievement gap among students of different socioeconomic classes and races?
- How have we used data to engage the community in efforts to improve student achievement?
- Who are the unofficial community leaders who can galvanize the community to action on behalf of marginalized students and their families?

6. Increasing Professional Development Relevant to School Counseling

Counselor educators need to choose professional development activities that increase their knowledge of schools. They may need to consider such questions as (a) What professional development activities will help me to prepare

school counselors in a new model? and (b) How am I engaged in focused, reflective discussion on the current changes in philosophy, program, and role of school counselors? For example, many counselor educators teaching in school counselor preparation programs have either not worked in schools or not worked in schools in a long time. Counselor educators can begin their professional development by becoming directly involved in the schools (Hayes, Dagley, & Horne, 1996). Such involvement helps educators to better understand current education reform issues faced by educators as well as current mandated accountability measures.

7. University–School District Partnerships

Close and continuous collaboration with school districts is an essential ingredient in this new process of preparing school counselors. Best practices happen both at the university and in K–12 schools. Neither higher education nor school districts can independently design and implement necessary changes needed for school counselors. While school counselors and administrators are anchored in the reality of schools, students, and learning, counselor educators are steeped in research and theory. Together, a cohesive, reality-based, research-guided curriculum can be designed and implemented. Working as collaborative stakeholders to create this new curriculum ultimately ends in greater acceptance of the new directions.

8. University–State Education Department Partnerships

Influencing policy at the state level becomes an integral part of success in this new model. State department entities determine policy and thus program directions. However, there is not often a clear working relationship and open lines of communication among state departments and universities and school districts. It is important to become a part of the process and influence changes made at the state level, determining such policies as testing, certification, accreditation, and licensing.

Groups that have a wide base of community, school, and university representation most often influence state departments. Therefore, a first action step is to use one's collaborative stakeholder group to determine what policies at the state level might be changed to enhance both the university and school district. This collaborative group must develop a united and focused approach based on the interest of serving all children. A thoughtful and planned approach, utilizing data and including

key stakeholders, will often make the difference in policy changes.

Conclusion

As leaders and advocates, counselor educators and school counselors need to reexamine recurrent professional role patterns and think in a more systemic fashion. They must be willing to reach and influence people beyond their jurisdiction, have political skills to cope with conflicting requirements of multiple constituencies, and question the status quo. When working from this framework, counseling professionals will be active creators and definers of systems change, rather than passive respondents to or victims of environmental circumstance. Preparation that produces school counselors who can practice as leaders and advocates to influence the attainment of high achievement for all students aligns school counselors with educational reform, and places them in the middle of the changes needed to support all students.

In this chapter we purposely look beyond the usual boundaries and faculty roles of the university as we propose changes in school counselor preparation. We suggest anchoring learning in the experience of the schools and communities by forming collaborative working relationships with key stakeholders in school districts and communities.

We propose that counselor educators teach school counselors to be advocates, leaders, helpers, collaborators, risk takers, and data users. To do this, counselor educators need to both teach and model these roles themselves. We hope the questions presented in this chapter can guide counselor educators to (a) reflect on their practice, (b) participate in a planned dialogue with colleagues and others, (c) infuse new principles in their teaching of school counselors, and (d) be social activists in their roles as counselor educators. By doing this, they will influence a new generation of school counselors to become leaders and advocates in the schools.

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